

Minutes
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee
May 23, 2005

Members Present: Maisha Barnett, Russ Brubaker, Susan Casey, Doug Dunham, Don Harper, Terry Holme, Jeff Hou, Cheryl Klinker, Sharon Lee, Peter Lukevich, Adrian Moroles, Joyce Moty, Jackie Ramels, Keith Rickards,

Staff Present: Superintendent Ken Bounds, Catherine Anstett, Bill Blair, Susan Golub, Donald Harris, Michael Shiosaki, Cathy Tuttle,

Committee Business: The May 23 meeting agenda and the minutes from the April 25th meeting were approved.

Committee Chair Russ Brubaker thanked Keith Rickards for his dedication and hard work with the Committee. The May meeting is Mr. Rickards last one, as his second term has expired. Mr. Rickards expressed his appreciation for the Chair's thoughts and told the Committee about the 6th Avenue Northwest Pocket Park opening celebration. Mr. Rickards thanked Parks staff for their help with this project and said the park opening was well attended and a wonderful celebration of the community's effort to create a new park. Superintendent Bounds also expressed his appreciation for Mr. Rickards work with the Oversight Committee and also on behalf of the new 6th Avenue Pocket Park.

Opportunity Fund Recommendations

Mr. Brubaker noted that tonight's meeting has an ambitious goal, to make recommendations for the Opportunity Fund and to decide the scheduling of the projects that are recommended for funding. Mr. Brubaker reminded the Committee of the Opportunity Fund criteria that were adopted by the City Council and the additional criteria that the Committee approved. He noted that for development projects the minimum award is \$100,000 and the maximum award is \$500,000. The maximum award for acquisition is \$1 million. [The criteria were displayed on the wall at the meeting and are attached to the minutes.] Mr. Brubaker suggested the process start with each member expressing their views on the staff recommendations.

Terry Holme: Mr. Holme noted that the projects on the recommended list generally meet the criteria; his main response is more of a value judgment for certain projects.

- **Ernst Park Addition:** Mr. Holme noted that while it is a unique opportunity, he is not as comfortable with the project as he is with others. He questioned what the loss will be to the community if the extra lot at the park is not purchased and can not envision the park enhancement that will occur with the additional property. In addition there are no leveraged funds for this project and once acquired will need development funding, and the Levy is investing heavily in Fremont at the Fremont Peak Park.
- **Ballard Pocket Park:** Mr. Holme questioned why this project was getting more funding than the Pinehurst Pocket Park.
- **Mt. Baker Viewpoint:** Mr. Holme noted that this park was receiving higher funding than some other parks.
- **Powell Barnett Park:** Mr. Holme thought that perhaps the allocation for this park was not enough to make a critical difference which is needed at this park.
- **Junction Plaza:** While this park meets a number of the criteria, Mr. Holme noted that he was not inspired by the design proposed for the park.

Projects Mr. Holme would like to see receive more funding than recommended by staff are the Eco-renovation of the Cascade People's Center and the Amy Yee Tennis Center.

Mr. Holme asked staff whether the Kubota Gardens Foundation is contributing to the acquisition project at that park.

Susan Casey: Ms. Casey began by noting how difficult the decisions are and that she generally supports acquisition projects over development because once the land is gone it is gone forever. However, she is concerned about the Ernst Park addition and does not believe it adds enough value for the money that it will cost. She is also concerned about the Ercolini project and thinks that allocation could be reduced.

If the Committee decides to allocate funds to projects not on the staff list, Ms. Casey would like to see money go to the Cascade People's Center and maybe Bailey Gatzert.

Joyce Moty: Ms. Moty said that she agrees with the thoughts of both Mr. Holme and Ms. Casey. Regarding the 12th Avenue Urban Village, Squire Park without the Park, Ms. Moty stated that she feels strongly that the neighborhood needs a new park. One proposal is to purchase the north parking lot of the King County Youth Detention Center. Ms. Moty asked if this would require all of the \$500,000; is the County under the same legal obligation as City Light to receive market value when they sell property. Superintendent Bounds responded yes, the County has the same legal requirement.

Ms. Moty supports a cut of funding to the Ernst Park Addition and an allocation to the Cascade People's Center.

Cheryl Klinker: Ms. Klinker noted her reservations to the Ballard Pocket Park, especially their lack of leveraged funding. For Junction Plaza, Ms. Klinker expressed the similarity of the Junction neighborhood to Lake City, and cited the importance to the community of a place for gathering. She stated the difficulty of bringing a major project together and would not like to see funding removed from the Junction which might hurt their ability to leverage additional money.

For the acquisition projects, Ms. Klinker cited her support for 12th Avenue, a community in need of green space. Regarding Ernst Park Addition, Ms. Klinker concurred with previous comments that questioned the value of the additional space in light of the cost.

Ms. Klinker stated her strong support for the Powell Barnett project citing its match with many of the Opportunity Fund criteria, and wished to see funding redirected from Ernst to the Amy Yee Tennis Center. Regarding the Cascade People's Center, Ms. Klinker's view is that the redevelopment of the South Lake Union neighborhood should provide opportunities for the project to find funding. Her priority is for open, green space over a building improvement.

Doug Dunham: Mr. Dunham expressed his strong support for the addition to Ernst Park. He thought that without the additional lot a big three or four story building would be built and be a negative impact on the existing park. He urged the Committee to take advantage of the opportunity to add land to an existing park, that when an opportunity arises to add to a park, the City should take action.

Mr. Dunham asked for a response to the question of what can be developed with the funding levels recommended by staff, especially when the amounts are significantly less than requested. Mr.

Dunham also asked whether the amounts dedicated to acquisition in the urban villages was sufficient, especially in light of the high property values in these neighborhoods. Staff directed Mr. Dunham's attention to a chart explaining what can be developed with the staff recommended amounts and what aspects of projects would not be developed, unless additional funds are raised. [This chart is included with the minutes.] Mr. Brubaker asked staff to review this chart after the Committee finished their initial comments on the recommendations.

Adrian Moroles: Mr. Moroles expressed support for the Cascade People's Center citing the strong support displayed at the public hearing. He would also like to add funding for the Amy Yee Tennis Center. Finding a source for this additional funding is difficult and Mr. Moroles suggested that maybe the percentage of funding for some of the projects is too high, while also noting it is hard to take funding away from projects already recommended for funding.

Mr. Moroles thought that the Bailey Gatzert project could perhaps be an alternative for the 12th Avenue Urban Village, but was surprised that there was no support for the project at the public hearing.

Jackie Ramels: Noting that her views would be unpopular, Ms. Ramels expressed reservations regarding the Cascade People's Center project. She gave considerable thought to this issue and submitted questions to staff to help her assessment of the project. Ms. Ramels stated that the South Lake Union neighborhood is undergoing significant development and recently received a \$10 million gift for South Lake Union Park. The building that is being proposed for renovation is practically a tear-down, and it would cost as much money to build a new building as it will for the eco-renovation. Ms. Ramels stated that she is not comfortable putting money into a building with an unsure future. The Pro Parks money is a legacy and should not be put into a building whose future is unknown.

Ms. Ramels stated that for the Amy Yee Tennis Center she would like to see the Tennis Center Advisory Council participate more in raising funds for the project. Ms. Ramels expressed strong support for the 12th Avenue Urban acquisition, noting that the neighborhood is very dense and needs open space. She is also in favor of the Junction Plaza project stating that it will provide important open space in the West Seattle downtown area.

Speaking generally about the recommendations, Ms. Ramels stated that she is okay with giving less money to more projects – with spreading the money among a larger number of projects – because the need to raise additional funds helps build communities. Communities would rather have some money rather than none at all and community support is an important aspect of developing projects.

Maisha Barnett: Ms. Barnett asked why the staff recommended amount for the Ernst Park Addition was \$70,000 higher than the requested amount. She expressed support for the Meridian Good Shepard Center project, citing the need for safety, visibility and access improvements at that location.

Kith Rickards: Mr. Rickards started by saying that he does not want to take money away from any project. He strongly supports the Ernst Park Addition and thought it would be a missed opportunity if that project is not funded. Mr. Rickards earlier reservations about the high costs for Fremont Peak Park have been alleviated.

Mr. Rickards expressed support for funding the Cascade People's Center, noting the need to keep the programs at the Center sustainable in the future. He supports the Colonnade Mountain Bike Park, and cited the unique opportunity and the energy and community support this project has received. Mr.

Rickards commented that he did not see a lot of community support for the Junction Plaza project. He stated his preference for funding Mt. Baker Ridge Viewpoint and Marra Farm.

Sharon Lee: After the last meeting, Ms. Lee went back to Ernst Park to assess the need for expansion. Because of the steep slope in the adjacent lot, she expressed concern about how this area could be incorporated into the existing park. She is not in favor of funding this project.

Ms. Lee expressed strong support for the 12th Avenue acquisition and for the Haller Lake Street End Park.

Regarding the Junction Plaza, Ms. Lee highlighted the \$200,000 set aside for the Junction Plaza and the \$888,000 set aside for the three urban villages (Denny Triangle, University District and Pioneer Square/International District). Ms. Lee recommended allocating \$200,000 for each of the urban village projects, the same as for the Junction Plaza. This would equal \$600,000, thereby freeing up \$288,000 for other priorities.

Her preferences for additional allocations would be \$150,000 - \$200,000 for the Cascade People's Center and \$150,000 - \$200,000 for the Amy Yee Tennis Center. She would also like to see the tennis center as a priority for the Department's major maintenance funding.

The actual development costs for the three urban villages are unknown; however it is likely that they will need another fund source. Ms. Lee's preference is to allocate \$200,000 for each of them and spread the rest of the money around to other projects.

Ms. Lee also expressed support for the International District Community Center expansion, stating the center is overused and the additional space will be used as a weight room.

Don Harper: Mr. Harper expressed interest in reducing the amounts for the Maple Leaf Community Garden and for the Junction Plaza. He believes there should be more community support for these projects. Mr. Harper agreed with previous comments about the limited value of the Ernst Park Addition. He would like to see additional funding for the Haller Lake Street End, noting the need to increase the supply of water access in the City, and supported additional funding for Powell Barnett.

Mr. Harper stated he thought the Cascade People's Center was a highly deserving project and should get funding he would recommend be cut from Ernst Park. He supports funding the Amy Yee Tennis Center, noting the compelling need especially since the outdoor courts have not been resurfaced for over twenty years.

Jeff Hou: Mr. Hou expressed support for the Cascade People's Center because the area is changing, becoming gentrified. It is important to support diversity in the neighborhood. Mr. Hou also supports the Amy Yee Tennis Center, and is in agreement with Ms. Lee that some of the development funding for the three large urban centers should be redistributed. In addition, Mr. Hou would like to see money given to the International District Community Center, noting that the cost is small and will go a long way.

Russ Brubaker: Mr. Brubaker expressed appreciation for Ms. Ramels courage and noted that he shares her reservations. However, Mr. Brubaker also expressed agreement with Mr. Hou's assertion that the community center will help preserve diversity in the gentrifying Cascade neighborhood.

Mr. Brubaker questioned whether there are other ways to fund some of the projects, especially regarding the Amy Yee Tennis Center and the capacity of the Board to raise money, or for the project to receive Parks capital funds.

Mr. Brubaker supports funding for the Haller Lake project, and noted that the Committee should recognize the efforts of the community to respond to the direction they received from the Committee during the first round of the Opportunity Fund. The project is better and has good community support and Mr. Brubaker would like to see additional funding go to the project. Regarding leveraging funds, Mr. Brubaker thought that not all projects could successfully leverage funds to complete the projects. While not wanting to fully fund any project, he would like more funding for Powell Barnett and the Brighton Science Project, because these communities may not be able to leverage funds as well as others.

Mr. Brubaker noted some disappointment over the lack of support at the public hearing for the Junction Plaza project, but expressed his belief that the project is a needed addition to the community. He also agrees with Ms. Lee's idea to reduce the funding for the development in the urban villages to \$200,000. However, he is hesitant to fund the 12th Avenue Urban Village because it will add another unknown, amorphous project where Parks needs to find a site. In general, Mr. Brubaker would like to see stronger funding for some projects, and probably does not support the Ernst Park Addition.

Staff Responses to Committee Member Acquisition Questions

Kubota Gardens: Donald Harris stated that Kubota Gardens is a green space acquisition that Parks can use Levy green space money for, and also that the Kubota Gardens Foundation has a building they plan to sell to provide money to purchase the lot that has a house (green space funds can not be used for a building).

Ernst Park Addition: Mr. Harris stated that the appraisal for the property is old and staff believes the value is too low, therefore the amount staff recommends is higher than originally requested.

12th Avenue and Ernst: Mr. Harris reported that the Department is in the midst of the King County Conservation Futures Tax allocation process and has requests for funding for both 12th Avenue and Ernst and that Parks is reasonably certain that funding will be approved. The Department asked for half of the needed funding and will probably get \$125,000 for Ernst. If the Committee wants to continue to consider Ernst, the amount needed could be reduced from \$370,000 to \$245,000 with the expectation that the CFT money will be approved.

For 12th Avenue, Parks presumes it will need about \$1 million to get started on a purchase in this neighborhood and asked for \$500,000 from King County; Parks is likely to get \$450,000. If there is no Opportunity Fund money allocated to the Ernst and 12th Avenue projects there is no match for the CFT funding.

Ms. Klinker asked if Ernst was off the list, could the funding be reallocated to 12th Avenue. Mr. Harris responded no, we would lose the \$125,000 dedicated to Ernst.

Response to Committee Member Development Questions

Mr. Dunham's question about what can be funded with the amount staff is recommending and the ability of communities to raise additional funds was addressed by Cathy Tuttle reviewing the handout the Committee received titled. This handout is attached to this memo.

After the handout was reviewed, the Committee began a discussion of changes to the staff recommendations. Mr. Brubaker noted that in order to add funding to a project the Committee must be willing to make cuts. Sharon Lee proposed the following cuts:

- Cut the development funding allocation to the three urban centers (University District, Denny Triangle, Pioneer Square/International District), so that each center receives \$200,000. This would free up \$288,000.
- Cut \$370,000 from the Ernst Park Addition.
- Add funding:
 - ❖ Haller Lake – add \$50,000
 - ❖ Powell Barnett – add \$50,000
 - ❖ Amy Yee Tennis Center – add \$200,000
 - ❖ Cascade People's Center – add \$250,000 and recommend that the renovation not strive for LEEDS platinum standard
 - ❖ International District Community Center – add \$100,000
 - ❖ Brighton Science Park – add \$8,000.

Mr. Harper asked what the impact would be of reducing the allocation to the three urban centers from \$888,000 to \$600,000. Superintendent Bounds responded that the reduced amount limits Parks ability to make the parks usable and accessible. Mr. Harris reported on the Department's progress towards acquiring land in the urban centers. In all cases staff is looking at fallback properties, while still pursuing first priorities. In the University District, Parks is looking at the south lot of the University Heights Elementary School. In the Denny Triangle, Parks is exploring the feasibility of sites. In the International District/Pioneer Square two appraisals are underway on Parks highest priority sites.

Mr. Holme expressed a concern about cost overruns, especially with building projects such as the Cascade People's Center. Mr. Harris noted that the CPC project could be scaled back to meet the available budget. Superintendent Bounds concurred, stating that with the funding allocated to the Cascade People's Center they could renovate perhaps one third of the building. Ms. Ramels questioned the relationship between Parks which owns the building and Lutheran Family Services which manages the programs within the building. She questioned whether providing funding for the renovation locked Parks into a long term relationship with a faith based organization. Superintendent Bounds remarked that the City would own the improvements and that Parks would renegotiate an agreement with a defined term.

Regarding the motion proposed by Ms. Lee, Superintendent Bounds stated that although we do not know what the needs will be for the three urban centers, we know that the development costs will be more than the \$888,000 recommended previously. At a minimum, \$200,000 will provide an accessible grade at each site, but if buildings must be removed or there is a lot of site work, it will not get done. He also stated that the acquisitions were nearing a "fish or cut bait" time frame: by this time next year Parks will have made significant progress on the acquisitions or the strategy will be changed. Mr. Bounds said that acquisition is opportunity driven and Parks is leveraging the Opportunity Fund money with Conservation Futures money and State Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation (IAC) funds. Ms. Anstett noted that the \$600,000 would be considered as a block and would not be considered strictly as \$200,000 per urban village.

A motion was made by Ms. Lee to eliminate funding for the Ernst Park acquisition. The motion passed by a vote of 10 to 2 with no abstentions.

A motion was made by Ms. Lee to reduce the allocation for the three urban villages from \$888,000 to \$600,000. The motion passed by a vote of 9-2 with 1 abstention.

A motion was made by Mr. Harper to reduce funding for Maple Leaf Community Garden by \$25,000. The motion failed for lack of a second.

A motion was made by Mr. Harper to reduce funding for the Junction Plaza by \$100,000. In response to a question, staff stated that providing \$100,000 for Junction Plaza would probably not be enough to develop an accessible park. Ms. Ramels spoke against the motion stating that the project exactly met the Opportunity Fund criteria. Mr. Brubaker expressed some concern at the lack of public support. The motion failed by a vote of 2 in favor, 8 against and 1 abstention.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunham to increase funding for the Haller Lake Community Street End project by \$50,000. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunham to increase funding for Powell Barnett Park by \$50,000. The motion passed 12 in favor with 2 abstentions.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunham to provide \$200,000 funding for the Amy Yee Tennis Center. The motion passed by a vote of 8 in favor, 3 opposed and 3 abstentions.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunham to provide \$250,000 funding for the Cascade People's Center. Mr. Brubaker offered an amendment to reduce the \$250,000 by \$42,000 and give the \$42,000 to the Brighton Science Park. Mr. Brubaker's motion received a second. Mr. Holme spoke against the amendment, noting that the project made a good pilot project and that \$100,000 would make a great start for the project. The amendment failed by a vote of 4 in favor, 8 against and 2 abstentions.

The original motion to provide \$250,000 for the CPC passed by a vote of 10 in favor, 3 against, and 1 abstention.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunham to provide \$100,000 for the International District Community Center acquisition. Mr. Holme offered a friendly amendment to make the allocation \$108,000. The amendment was accepted. Superintendent Bounds stated that the property cost is \$160,000. Ms. Lee indicated that there may be an opportunity to purchase the property for less. The motion passed by a vote of 11 in favor and 3 against.

Ms. Lee asked staff what the fallback position should be if some of the funds are not spent. Superintendent Bounds responded that there would likely be money in the Opportunity Fund as the Levy winds down because unspent Levy money is directed to the Fund. The committee concluded that they would wait and allocate unspent Opportunity Fund money at a later date.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunham to adopt the staff recommendations as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Project Scheduling

Projects that were newly recommended for funding by the Committee were added to the scheduling chart: Amy Yee 2006, Cascade People's Center 2007 and International District Community Center

2005. Staff noted that the need to spread the project start dates over several years is a response to the need to balance cash flow for the whole program and staff management considerations. It was noted that the year a project starts is not when all of the funds become available, that funding will be spread out.

A motion was made to approve the staff recommendations for project scheduling with the additional projects added to the list. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Business

Mr. Brubaker noted that the agenda for the next meeting on June 27 would include Oversight Committee audit review follow-up and a membership update. Mr. Lukevich asked whether the Oversight Committee would be involved in developing the next park levy. Superintendent Bounds responded that this was not the charge of the Oversight Committee, although he knew and hoped many individuals on the Committee would be involved.

The Committee thanked staff for the hard work on the Opportunity Fund and the meeting was adjourned.